





Florida's **Missing** *& Unidentified Issue*

By Dinah Johnson, FDLE MEPIC

Florida Department of Law Enforcement
Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse

1-888-356-4774

In 2005, the U.S. Department of Justice held a conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and invited representatives from all over the United States to convene and address the issue of the missing and unidentified deceased persons in the United States. The participants included, but were not limited to, members of law enforcement, medical examiners, forensic anthropologists, and parents of missing persons. Those who attended were presented the challenge of collaborating, solving, and addressing the issue of the missing and unidentified deceased persons within their states.

In 2007, an article written by Nancy Ritter from the Department of Justice called the issue

of unidentified deceased as the "Nation's Silent Mass Disaster." She describes the unidentified deceased persons issue as a crisis that has accumulated over a long period of time, as opposed to a single incident, such as a hurricane. Many of these unidentified deceased persons represent victims of homicide, some are transients, and many are long term missing adults and children. Regardless of the circumstances, each represents a family that is missing a loved one. Furthermore, it has been shown that the identification of an individual can develop leads to a homicide investigation and the arrest of a suspect.

According to statistics, more than 100,000 people are entered as missing everyday in the

FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC), a database maintained by the FBI. There are currently over 7,000 unidentified deceased persons listed in that database for the U.S. Florida currently has 672 unidentified deceased persons listed in NCIC and is ranked third in the nation as having the most active unidentified deceased person records, behind Texas and California. This number is still considered an underreported number even if Florida Statute 406.145 states that when an unidentified deceased body has been discovered, it must be entered into the NCIC database.

In response to this crisis, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement launched the Joint

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Jennifer Kesse And Tiffany Sessions Missing Persons Act

By Dinah Johnson, FDLE MEPIC

On July 2008, the Florida legislature signed the Jennifer Kesse and Tiffany Sessions Missing Persons Act. Governor Charlie Crist held a ceremonial signing on Florida Missing Children's Day in October 27, 2008. This bill expanded the Florida Department of Law Enforcement Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse to accept missing adult cases.

It also stated that law enforcement agencies shall enter a missing person entry into the FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC) within 2 hours of a person determined missing and not to remove that person from NCIC based solely on their age. Also, if a person has been missing for over 90 days, Florida law enforcement agencies must collect DNA samples from the missing person or biological relatives of the missing person.



Florida's Missing
& Unidentified

Initiative between the FDLE Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse and the FDLE Medical Examiners Commission to Identify Florida's Unidentified, an action committee to tackle the statewide issue of the missing and unidentified. The purpose of this initiative is to present new technological resources and assistance to medical examiners and Florida law enforcement agencies in an effort to bring answers to families of missing loved ones and provide investigative leads for homicide cases. Examples of these resources include the FBI's NCIC database, DNA database technology for missing and unidentified, fingerprint database searches, forensic odontologist references, forensic artists, forensic anthropologist services, and new websites for missing and unidentified persons.

Since May 2006, the FDLE Joint Initiative has assisted in identifying 22 unidentified deceased persons. Some of these recently identified people had been missing for over 25 years and were reported missing children and adults. Although it is a challenging task for law enforcement and medical examiners in the state of Florida, it is reassuring to know that new technology and resources are available to provide answers for many families of missing loved ones and know that there is hope; regardless of how long a person has been missing.

For more information regarding the Joint Initiative to Identify Florida's Unidentified Deceased, please contact the FDLE MEPIC at 1-888-356-4774.

Florida Missing Persons DNA Program

By Dinah Johnson, FDLE MEPIC

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement's (FDLE) Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse (MEPIC) recently assisted the Lee County Sheriff's Office with the identification of a person missing since 2005 through the use of DNA technology.

On April 2009, the FDLE's Joint Initiative to Identify Florida's Unidentified Deceased made its twenty-second identification by providing assistance and information regarding DNA submission. The unidentified deceased person was brought to the Fort Myers District 21st Medical Examiners Office on September 19, 2007. DNA from the unidentified person was submitted to the University of North Texas by the Fort Myers Medical Examiners Office. The FDLE laboratory forwarded a razor containing the missing person's DNA to the University of Texas, Center for Human Identification (UNT CHI). After receiving a call for assistance from the Lee County Sheriff's Office's, Sergeant Reaves, it was discov-

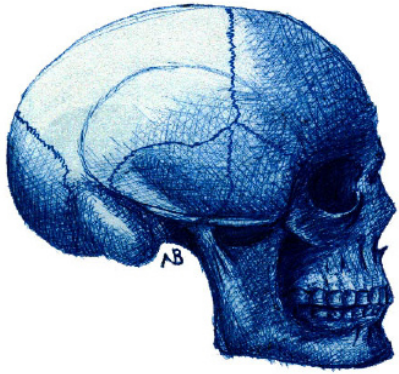
ered that the DNA samples from the unidentified and the missing person were a match or a "cold hit" in the National DNA Index System. The unidentified remains were found to be those of James Caccavari, who had been missing since 2005 from Cape Coral.

The UNT CHI in Fort Worth, Texas has designated the FDLE MEPIC section as the DNA Control Point for the state of Florida. This laboratory is funded by the President's DNA Initiative, which is a 5-year, billion dollar initiative from the Department of Justice. The purpose of this laboratory is to use DNA technology to solve missing and unidentified person cases.

The role of the FDLE MEPIC section is to serve as a DNA Control Point and act as a liaison between local law enforcement agencies in Florida and the UNT CHI lab to instruct them of procedures to collect and submit DNA. Also, to provide assistance when needed to help them identify their unidentified deceased persons and distribute DNA kits for relatives of missing persons.

The "Jennifer Kesse and Tiffany Sessions Missing Persons Act" was passed on July 2008, which required law enforcement agencies to attempt to collect DNA for persons missing over 90 days. Since then, Florida agencies have submitted over 275 DNA samples to the UNTCHI from approximately over 87 different medical examiners offices and law enforcement agencies. As a result, there has been one cold hit match, and three warm hit matches since the law was in effect. A "warm hit" is when a possible match between a missing and unidentified person's DNA profile is manually compared and proved to be a match.

For more information regarding the FDLE Missing Persons DNA Program, please contact GA Dinah Johnson at the FDLE MEPIC section at 1-888-356-4774. Anyone having information regarding the disappearance and death of James Caccavari, 47, whose remains were found in September 2007 near Cape Coral, is asked to call Southwest Florida Crime Stoppers at 800-780-8477.



New National Tool for Investigating Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains Cases

By Michele Money-Carson, NamUs

Families with missing loved ones have had few places to turn in their quest for answers, until now. The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) in partnership with the National Forensic Science Technology Center (NFSTC) have developed The National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) — a searchable database that can provide families with hands-on access to a national database of records related to missing and unidentified persons.

Launched in January 2009, NamUs is a free web-based tool accessible to everyone, but geared to law enforcement and medical examiners/coroners. Available online 24/7 at www.namus.gov, it allows families and victim advocates to collaborate by providing thorough, primary source information about missing and unidentified persons cases in the United States. Regional system administrators monitor and validate new information to prevent fraud and

improve case management. The system is simple to learn and easy to use.

Data regarding missing persons can be entered in NamUs by law enforcement professionals, missing persons clearinghouses and the general public. Unidentified remains cases are entered by medical examiners and coroners offices. Those with law enforcement clearance can add sensitive information and photos that are not viewable by the public, keeping necessary communications associated with the cases conveniently with case data.

The NamUs system allows entry of many types of identifiers in searchable fields. Categories include the obvious things like hair and eye color, but also very specific information like car make and model, dental records, descriptions of scars or tattoos and even availability of DNA test results.

In July 2009, the NamUs system was upgraded to allow side-by-side comparisons between the missing persons and uniden-

tified persons cases within the system. This allows investigators to exclude potential matches and narrow down the search. NamUs is already being credited for providing evidence that led to the resolution of at least three cases.

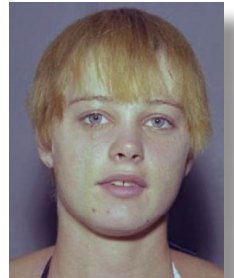
Missing persons and unidentified human remains cases present a huge test to state and local law enforcement agencies. In the United States, there are an estimated 100,000 active missing persons cases and more than 40,000 unidentified human remains. In 2005, the NIJ brought together law enforcement officials, medical examiners and coroners, forensic scientists, policymakers, and victim advocates and families from around the country. The event resulted in a charge to the Department of Justice (DOJ) to identify every available tool — and create others — to solve missing persons and unidentified human remains cases.

Visit www.namus.gov to learn more.

Finger Print Identification Leads to Identification of Deceased Woman Over 25 Years

By Dinah Johnson, FDLE MEPIC

On April of 2008, Special Agent Lissa Udell contacted the FDLE Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse (MEPIC) section to have fingerprints belonging to an unidentified deceased person searched in FDLE Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) provided by Medical Legal Investigator Wendy Crane. SA Udell's efforts resulted in the identity of a woman named Tina Moore. Tina Moore, who was a victim of commercial sexual exploitation, had been at the Broward ME Office as an unidentified deceased homicide victim for over 25 years. Her body was found on September 13, 1983 in a wooded area in Pompano Beach. At the time that she was identified, information could not be found regarding her next-of-kin for notification purposes. Her photo was displayed on the Broward Sheriff's Office "Found & Forgotten" website with the word "Identified" stamped across her information, displaying information provided by Medical Legal Investigator Wendy Crane. The "Found & Forgotten" website was created by the Broward County Medical Examiner Office last year and posts unidentified deceased persons information.



A year later, on July 2009, relatives visited the "Found & Forgotten" website and recognized the young lady's photo posted as identified. They contacted the Broward Sheriff's Office to inform the agency of her real name: Mary Ann Lambert. According to Medical Legal Investigator Wendy Crane, she was a habitual runaway, who lived in Pompano Beach. Her family never reported her missing. Dental records were compared to further confirm her identity. Without the Special Agent Udell's tenacity, along with cooperation between the Broward ME Office Medical Legal Investigator Wendy Crane and the Broward Sheriff's Office, this identification would not have been possible. What is even more important is Mary Ann Lambert's relatives no longer have to wonder as to the whereabouts of their missing loved one. Finally, after 26 years, Mary Ann Lambert will be going home to New York to be buried next to her father.

This case is still considered a homicide case. Anyone with information about Mary Ann Lambert, also known as Tina Moore, is asked to contact the Broward Crime Stoppers at 954-4933-TIPS. For more information regarding the Joint Initiative to Identify Florida's Unidentified, please contact GA Dinah Johnson at FDLE MEPIC 1-888-356-4774.



11th Annual Florida Missing Children's Day Ceremony



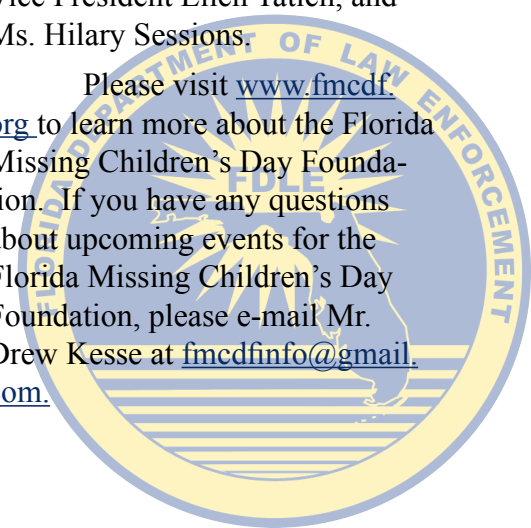
Each second Monday of September has been designated by the Florida Legislature as Florida Missing Children's Day. This year, the 11th Annual Florida Missing Children's Day formal ceremony will be held in Tallahassee at the Capitol Courtyard at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, September 14, 2009. This ceremony is open to the public. Each year parents, children, law enforcement officers and citizens convene on the steps of the Old Capitol Building in Tallahassee to remember Florida's missing children who are still missing and those who

will never come home again. The Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and FDLE Commissioner are invited as speakers. The objective of this day is to raise awareness of Florida's currently missing children, to educate the public on child safety and abduction prevention, and to recognize those individuals who have made outstanding contributions in the missing children issue.

Recently, the Florida Missing Children's Day Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization, was formed to support the Florida Missing Children's Day. Mr. Drew Kesse serves as the organization's president and is respon-

sible for the new website and the foundation's fundraising efforts. He is the parent of Jennifer Kesse, who went missing on January 24, 2006 in Orlando. Other foundation members include: Ms. Amy Bogner, Secretary Harlee Samuels, Vice President Ellen Tatich, and Ms. Hilary Sessions.

Please visit www.fmcdff.org to learn more about the Florida Missing Children's Day Foundation. If you have any questions about upcoming events for the Florida Missing Children's Day Foundation, please e-mail Mr. Drew Kesse at fmcdffinfo@gmail.com.





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**Florida Missing Children's Day Foundation, Inc.
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